

HB 5659
Testimony – House Education Committee
Macomb Intermediate School District
Dr. Judith Pritchett, Chief Academic Officer
May 30, 2012

On behalf of the Macomb County Superintendents and Curriculum Administrators we would like to add our support to HB 5659 or the substitute Bill as referred to at the beginning of this hearing. In an era of standards-based education, the highest function of a K-12 education system should be the accreditation of its schools using a standards-based approach. It must be possible for each school to receive or not receive accreditation based on its own merits and not in relation to other schools. Voluntary accreditation, in general, has to do with whether an organization meets a set of agreed upon external standards of operation, performance, and quality specific to its purpose. Central to most of these accreditation systems is the existence of an agency or organization that is the keeper of the standards, controls the accreditation process, and ultimately decides whether a particular organization seeking accreditation meets the standards and should be accredited. The self-study process is a critical part of accreditation; it is the source of the rich, detailed information about the organization that leads to deeper understanding and continuous improvement of its student outcomes.

In Macomb County approximately 75% of the schools have already made the choice to enter a voluntary process of accreditation. The decision to commit to the accreditation process is one that requires resources on the part of the district and school. It includes feedback from students, parents, and community members along with staff. It involves collection of achievement data (not just MEAP or MME), attendance and graduation rates, parental involvement, credentials of the staff and perceptions from stakeholders in the school

community. It is an intense and locally specific review of all components that directly impact student achievement. The culmination of this process includes a personal visit from other professionals not directly connected to the specific school or district. This multi-day visit provides the school community with an 'external' view of the progress made based on the goals and objectives developed by the local school community after an intense data review and analysis. It is a time where dialogue and deep discussions about student progress and research based instructional strategies is shared around the table with all members of the visiting team and school community sharing best practices. The result is a long term learning experience for everyone and, most importantly, an opportunity for the school itself to continually improve based on the discussions.

We commend the members of the legislature for recognizing that accreditation is not merely one point in time based on one assessment. It is a rigorous continuous process of growth and improvement giving the school community an opportunity to set their own goals based on locally determined priorities. And, for it to be truly beneficial this proposed legislation or a repeal of 1280 gives schools the choice to enter into a process that will support them in analyzing all of the components of a quality school community which will positively impact student achievement.